

Remarks

In response to the Office Action dated September 26, 2006, Applicant(s) respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above claim amendment and the following remarks. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Interview Summary

A phone interview was conducted with the Examiner on December 12, 2006. During the interview, perceived differences were discussed between the Anderson reference and the subject matter of the present application. Particularly, it was discussed that Anderson is concerned with invoices sent to the customer, as opposed to raw usage data, and that Anderson is further concerned with an intermediary performing a review on behalf of the customer, as opposed to returning the results of the review back to the originator of the billing information. It was agreed that amendments to the claims would be submitted.

103 Rejections

Claims 2-20 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Anderson (US Patent 6,058,380). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections to the extent they apply to the currently pending claims. Independent claims 2, 8 and 14 each recite similar subject matter that is not disclosed by Anderson. As a representative example, independent claim 2 recites, "...receiving a plurality of defective billing records containing raw usage data sent from a plurality of client computer sites, each having legacy usage and billing systems, at a centralized server site, the centralized server site including a master database...sending corrected billing records from the centralized server to the client computer sites that sent the defective billing records for further processing.

As discussed above, Anderson is concerned with an intermediary, such as a bank having database 201 and analyzer 32, collecting invoices that have been sent by a vendor 10 for purposes of delivery to a customer 209. The bank may apply a reasonability test to the invoice prior to updating an accounts payable for the customer and/or before transmitting payment on behalf of the customer. This disclosure of Anderson has several deficiencies relative to the currently

pending claims.

Anderson discloses that the invoice is being sent from the vendor 10 to the bank and database 201 for purposes of receiving payment from the customer 209. Thus, these are customer-ready invoices. The claims recite that the billing records include raw usage data. Raw usage data, as defined in the specification, is the data being received directly from the metered systems providing the service to the customer. Thus, it is apparent that raw usage data is not a customer-ready invoice as in Anderson. Thus, the pending claims are allowable over Anderson for at least these reasons.

Next, Anderson discloses that the intermediary, i.e., the bank, performs the reasonability analysis in order to advise the customer on paying the bill. At no point does the intermediary that has analyzed the invoices apply a correction that is returned to the vendor so that further processing can occur before generating bills to the customer. The claims recite that the central server site sends the corrected billing records back to the client computer sites that sent the defective billing records. Thus, the pending claims are allowable over Anderson for at least these additional reasons.

Dependent claims 2-7, 9-13, and 15-20 depend from allowable base claims and are also allowable for at least the same reasons.

Conclusion

Applicants assert that the application including claims 2-20 is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and further examination in view of the amendment and remarks above and further request that a Notice of Allowability be provided. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

No fees are believed due. However, please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3025.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 25, 2007

/Jeramie J. Keys/

Jeramie J. Keys
Reg. No. 42,724

Withers & Keys, LLC
P.O. Box 71355
Marietta, GA 30007-1355
(404) 849.2093